



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE SPECIAL AGENTS ARREST 39 ILLEGAL ALIENS IN MOTEL *Investigation links case to 53 people found inside a mobile home last week*

LAS CRUCES, N.M.—More than 90 aliens brought into the U.S. by a major southern New Mexico smuggling organization have been arrested within the past seven days by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

ICE special agents arrested the latest group of 39 illegal aliens Wednesday who were occupying four rooms of the Bruce Motel, 800 S. Main. Thirty men, five women, and four children were in the group. Two of the youngest children, brothers 3 and 4 years old, were accompanied by their mother.

ICE special agents Friday arrested a teen-aged smuggler who allegedly crammed another 53 aliens in a mobile home about two miles away from the motel. Since then, agents have also seized eight SUVs allegedly used by members of a major alien smuggling organization to transport the aliens.

Ron Wood, special agent in charge of the ICE El Paso Office, said the smuggler is believed to charge aliens smuggling fees between \$1,800 and \$2,100. The aliens who were arrested Wednesday told ICE agents their smuggler abandoned them after dropping them off at the Central El Paso motel the day before.

“It’s not surprising to hear of smugglers abandoning aliens after collecting their fees,” Wood said. “These smugglers have repeatedly demonstrated that they have no regard for human life. ICE will not tolerate their illegal activity. We’re going after them with all our legal authority and every resource we have.”

ICE special agents determined the 39 aliens were from the Mexican states of Guanajuato, Michoacan and Oaxaca. Some aliens in the group said they were from Mexico City. U.S. Border Patrol agents assisted ICE in processing the aliens before all 39 were returned to Mexico Wednesday night.

Mario Rolando Hernandez-Cervantes, 19, remains jailed as a federal prisoner at the Doña Ana County Detention Facility awaiting trial on alien smuggling charges.

The investigation into this smuggling operation is on going.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.